(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Recovery of loans is an on-going process and the concerned bank has already taken steps to recover its loans from all its borrowers. NAB ARD has reported that MSCARDB is taking action against the influential and big defaulters on priority basis.

Smuggling of Antique idols

2513. SHRIRAJUPARMAR:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Antique idol smugglers caught" appearing on 23rd May, 2001 in the Hindustan Times, New Delhi;

(b) if so, what is the value of rare idols stolen from various temples;

(c) whether Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has registered cases in the matter;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to protect the rare and historical idols from being smuggled out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Idols stolen from various temples have not been evaluated.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. On the basis of specific information, 3 idols were recovered by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) from a hotel in Man gal ore on 1.2.2000. As per the opinion of Archaeological Survey of India, these objects viz. Bronze of Vishnu (63x24x20 cm.), Bronze of Sri Devi (55x20x 18) and Bronze of Bhudevi (65.5x18.5x17.5), are the Utsava Murthys belonging to a Vaishnava temple and are assignable to Circa 18th Century A.D. The matter was subsequently referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and after preliminary enquiry a regular case was registered on 12.2.2001 under the provisions of Indian Penal Code. During investigation by CBI, two persons have been arrested from Bangalore and Mangalore in Karnataka State. It further came to light that the recovered idols have been stolen from a temple in Nellore,

Distt. Andhra Pradesh by a gang of thieves for which a FIR was already lodged on 30.9.1999 at PS Chajerala, Distt Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

(e) All the field formations under the Customs Department including Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) are alert and vigilant to check smuggling of goods including smuggling of rare and historical idols out of the country. Measures have also been drawn up by the Archaeological Survey of India in consultation with the agencies such as the Driectorate of Revenue Intelligence, Central Bureau of Investigation, Customs and the State Governments to check the theft of antiques and their smuggling by stepping up of vigilance and intensifying checking at Customs exit points as well as by strict enforcement of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972.

Interception of contraband at Chennai airport

2514. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large quantity of contraband was intercepted in diplomatic bags at Chennai airport recently;

(b) if so, whether these contraband originated from Singapore;

(c) whether the diplomatic mission on whose name the baggage was consigned had disowned the same; and

(d) what is the value of the contraband intercepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir. 109.021 kgs. of gold biscuits alongwith gold jewellery totally weighing 10.111 kgs, 1100 nos. of RAM chips and 150 nos. of Panasonic GD90 cell phones, recovered from 12 bags which arrived as 'diplomatic mail', were seized by the Customs Department on 11.7.2001.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The value of the contraband intercepted is Rs. 5.70 crores.

MIS appropriation in import of Silver Ingots

2515. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as reported in the Press there has been misappropriation of